DAN TELLS HIS EXPERIENCE WHEN HE QUIT DRINKING

Struggle Brings Out Flood of Reminiscences of Pre-Volstead Days With Some Moonshine Confessions and a Suggestion for Prof. Einstein—Famous Motor Trip in Washington With Private Jazz Band Also Is Remembered, With Its Amusing Climax

By DAN CAREY.

WHEN we determined to quit drinking it was not our idea that we would be creating copy, nor during the subsequent struggle we engaged in to overcome an appetite that had been with us since early childhood was it our aim to provide impressions that could later be written about. Our sole desire was to stop drinking. Of course now that we have succeeded it is only natural to boast about it a little.

There have been a number of articles recently by writers who confess to all kinds of intimate and personal things. We know of no reason why our own testimony should not be added to the sum total of human knowledge. We have had articles about how to reduce one's weight, increase one's blood pressure, maintain the happiness of a home, operate an automobile, stop eating opium and suppress jealousy in a harem.

Of course we could, if we would, write at considerable length on this automobile question. The title for this story would be "The Confessions of an Automobile Owner." To be perfectly frank about it, the only reason we do not write this story is that we are not quite sure about the statutes of limitation, and until we ascertain definitely just when criminal prosecutions are barred by time discretion prompts us to remain silent.

We had one of these automobiles that was absolute perfection, with the exception of the transmission, the differential, the steering equipment and the starting system.

It reminded us of a statement once made to us by the manager of a theatrical performance whose show we had been sent to criticise. After the second act he asked us how we liked it. We began to evade.

"Tell me exactly what you think of it," he said.

"Do you really mean that?" we asked.

"Certainly. I want to know.

"Well, I think it is about the rottenest show I ever saw," we answered bluntly.

"My Gawd, man!" he answered, "just look at them costumes!"

That is about what the automobile dealer replied when we directed his attention to the minor defects in the car which we have spoken of.

"That car has the best engine in the world," he said.

He was telling the truth about it too. It was a fine engine and never gave us a particle of trouble. Neither did the car, for that matter, as long as we ran in a straight line. It was only when we attempted to turn corners that the things would break. However, the automobile did not break any more completely than we did before we stopped associating with each other.

We might at this juncture make a parody, using as a basis the man who had both money and friends, but the thing is so obvious that we merely suggest it to you. You can work it out as well as we can.

* * *

HOWEVER, we started out to tell how we stopped drinking. Our determination was the result of dining at the home of a friend on the Friday evening before Labor Day. Our friend served on that evening a delightful substitute for our favorite drink, but the substitute had absolutely no effect in it whatever. The taste was the same, the smell was identical, and there was just as much pleasure in the drinking, but without the kick.

It reminded us of what old Uncle Aaron said about a drink we gave him one afternoon as a reward for extra and rather arduous labors in the vegetable garden, where he had given battle to and conquered a perfect horde of potato bugs.

When the old man came whistling up to the back door there was a look of satisfaction about him.

"Dar now," he exclaimed triumphantly. "I'll be bound we ain't gwinter be pestered by dem bugs no mo'. Dey sho met dey death dis day."

"Yessur, I believes I will, it bein' sech a hot day," he continued in response to our invitation.

So the old man took a perfectly enormous drink which we poured out for him—took it without water and smacked his lips.

"Do you want a little water, Aaron?" we asked, thinking he might have been burned by the liquor.

"Nosur," he replied, "I won't take no water. What's de use of buildin' er fire ef yo' gwine ter pour water on it and put her out?"

* * *

THERE is another set of confessions, by the way, that we are fully qualified to write about. Once we tried to be a moonshiner. Our confessions on this subject would recount our failures in that noble profession. Of course we come from a State where moonshining has progressed from being a mere profession into the realm of real art.

An article of this kind would naturally begin with our experience in covering a layer of peaches with a coating of sugar, following with another layer of peaches, and so upward and onward until the crock was filled at great labor and enormous cost. It would speak of our amazement in discovering several weeks later that we had produced merely crystallized fruit, which could be extracted from the crock only with the aid of an axe.

Our confessions would tell of the number of yeast cakes we had wasted and of the quarts of grape juice we had spoiled in attempts to produce a drink that could be offered to a visitor at the home without creating suspicion that an attempt was being made on his life. Several times we have even thought that we could see the effect of the poison as it coursed.

Then we would have to tell about the beer we made, which was about of the consistency of glue and which smelled more like gum arabic than it did like anything else. This particular substance we threw out the kitchen window into the back yard, but even the chickens would not eat it, and the dog stayed away three days.

Yes, some day we are going to write about our efforts at moonshining. Candor compels us to admit that the stuff we made was even worse than New Yorkers are now consuming at a dollar a drink.

They tell a story about a man who went into a saloon after the whole business was supposed to have been ended by the Eighteenth Amendment. This saloonist's price was a dollar a drink, and he personally did the pouring.

"Give me one please," said the man.

It was produced for him and set on the counter. He gulped it down. He passed a few words with the bartender.

"Another one, please," he said cheerfully.

The second one was produced. Again he gulped it down. He talked some more.

"I believe I will have another one," he remarked.

"Probably you will, but you owe for two now," said the bartender.

"Yes, I know it."

"Well, where is the money. I'll take two dollars, please."

"Oh, I haven't any money. You see it is illegal for you to sell whiskey, so I am assisting you in obeying the law by not paying you."

"You may think you will get away with that, but you will not.," answered the bartender. He reached into a drawer for a pistol, which he placed on the counter.

"That pistol will not do a particle of good," said the stranger. You see, in the first place I haven't got the money, and in the second place, if you were to create a disturbance, and particularly if you were to shoot me, you would get into an awful amount of trouble."

The pistol was replaced in the drawer, while the bartender glared at the man.

"I tell you what I will do," said the stranger. "If you will give me that third drink I will tell you how to avoid things like this in the future."

"Well, just on account of the nerve of you I'll do it," answered the bartender, and he produced the drink. The man drank it with very evident relish.

"Now, I'll tell you what to do," he said confidentially. "Throw away that pistol, which you can't use any more, and buy a stomach pump, which may come in handy some time."

* * *

SO, as we were saying, we decided to stop drinking, and having reached this determination we began the reform early the next morning. We did without our customary early morning drink. We refused it definitely when it was offered to us at the breakfast table. So far as we can judge its absence made little difference in our appetite during the first meal of the day.

During the morning, however, we began to miss very distinctly the drink we had been accustomed to. Before the noon hour one of those dull headaches (the kind that make one wish for a more severe ache) had appeared, and by early afternoon we were stretched out on the day bed, indulging in mean thoughts about the neighbors, saying cross things to the children and admitting that we had the nature of a bear and did not care.

Saturday night we slept very little because of the aches and pains that annoyed us. We knew that one drink would straighten us out, but we had started the struggle and determined to go through with it.

Our experience on Sunday was about the same, although on the afternoon of this day we did cheat a little by going to a soda fountain and calling for a soft drink which we knew had a bite in it.

Of course we are very proud of the struggle we made, and it is only natural to boast about the fact that we conquered, but we will admit that perhaps we are personally interested in our own sufferings more than are others, and therefore we will not give a detailed account of what we suffered. We will be content with saying that on Tuesday we felt normal again. We have not had a drink of coffee since, and our mind is fully made up to give up this habit, which was formed in our early childhood and which we continued until our friend set us the example at his dinner party.

We have now qualified for the position of secretary of the new national association which ought to be formed for the purpose of having adopted a twentieth amendment to the Constitution of the United States forbidding persons from drinking coffee.

If any one thinks there is no struggle connected with stopping this habit let him try it.

* * *

Before we stopped drinking coffee, however, we discovered a scientific fact. It is that when water is confined in a vessel it remains stationary when the vessel is moved. In other words, a coffee cup may be turned around several times without moving the coffee at all. We discovered this one morning when a coffee grain was on top of the liquid. We found that we could turn the cup completely around without moving the grain or the liquid.

We are sure that this can be applied to the universe in some way. Prof. Einstein could take a simple fact like this and prove that the thing we call the sky is merely the top of our bubble in the coffee cup of some prodigous being, while the earth is a speck of dust inside the bubble.

Presently he will drink his coffee and our bubble with it. Or maybe he has already drank it, in which event our universe is by now probably lodged in his veriform appendix to his own discomfiture and the delight of his physician.

* * *

WE have read over the first part of this article and somehow or other we gain the impression that we did not make it very clear in the beginning that in our struggle against drink it was coffee of which we were speaking. So many persons have come to believe that the only possible drinking habit is whiskey drinking, which, of course, includes everything containing more than the forbidden one-half of 1 per cent.; but it isn't true. There are all sorts of drinking habits, and whiskey is (theoretically, was) only one of them.

Now that they have made it impossible to get a drink of liquor there is every reason to broaden the word "drink" to its original meaning, so that when a man is said to be drinking the natural question should be, "Drinking what?"

Of course, in the old days it was different. We are speaking of the days when a man could hire a couple of negro musicians, one with a fiddle and the other with a banjo, and carry them around with him for an entire evening, so that he and his friends could have music whenever they wished.

We had a friend who used to do that. The last time he performed was in Washington. He was from our home town, but we ran across him several years ago in the national capital, where he had gone to secure a Government contract. He was in a seven passenger car which he had rented for the occasion, and had his two musicians with him.

Our business for the day being over we accepted his invitation to ride and enjoy the music.

The wartime patriotism was at its height. The hunt for spies and slackers and draft evaders was under way. It may have been this influence or it may have been just a natural desire to recite poetry. Anyway, our friend suddenly said, "Driver, stop your car." He did so.

"Driver," continued our friend, "'Lives there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said, "This is my own, my native land." If such there be, go mark him well——'"

At this point our friend forgot the remainder of the poem. He stopped short.

"No, sir, I don't know any such man," answered the driver of the car.

"Very well, then," said our friend, impressively, "you may drive on."

It evidently appealed to his sense of humor, for in about five minutes he again stopped the automobile and the dialogue was repeated. Again the driver disclaimed any knowledge whatsoever of the man in question.

A third time the thing was repeated to the amusement of our friend. The driver was becoming a little nervous.

"'If such there be, go mark him well,'" quoted our friend in reiteration, shaking a solemn finger at the driver of the car.

"Mark him, mark him," answered the automobile driver. "Say, mister, I won't only mark him, I'll beat hell out of him and then turn him over to the police."

The remainder of our evening was confined to music.

"He was in a seven passenger car he had rented for the occasion and had his two musicians with him. . . . We accepted his invitation to ride and enjoy the music."

Mountain People of the South and Their Future

By DOROTHY STEELE.

WHEN the smoke of battle clears away and the excitement over strikes and feuds dies down on the Appalachian Plateau there will still remain the mountaineers. The mountaineer as he is to-day may be lacking in many things, but in his life of freedom and independence he is an American with many of the characteristics of pioneer days and he has given a good account of himself in history.

It has always taken some violent upheaval to jostle him out of his hills and hollows. The civil war brought out stalwart supporters on both sides, but after the chaos of reconstruction the sons of the hills were apparently forgotten and lapsed into more complete isolation than ever.

Now that local conditions have once more directed the spotlight of publicity on him, revealing him in all his pathetic grandeur, it may prove the permanent turning of the tide in his favor.

"They are just plain onery," was about the most complimentary comment that could be had from the lowlanders in West Virginia regarding their mountain neighbors. The lowlanders are not given to sentimentalizing over their mountain neighbor and his hard luck, and are not deeply impressed when it is suggested that maybe the poor things haven't had a chance.

Little Sympathy for Them From Their Lowland Neighbors

I refused to accept the theory that they are altogether "onery," as they say in the South, meaning good for nothing.

"These poor people have evidently been left behind in the march of civilization," I ventured.

"Yes, they got left behind because they was too 'onery' to keep up," was the reply. So it is evident that not much sympathy or interest is expended on the poor whites by their neighbors, either as they were or as they are.

It would certainly be about as easy to draw up a general characterization of the throngs who hourly pass Herald Square as it is to visit any point in the Southern mountains and attempt to characterize the mountaineers. We might say that all the girls who pass Herald Square have ankles, but very few have pretty ones, and we might say that all the mountaineers live in the mountains but very few are feudists or gunmen.

The Appalachian Plateau, or what is sometimes described as the mountainous backyards of the Southern States, extends from the Ohio River to Birmingham, Ala., a wide area, beautiful and fertile, but much of it entirely isolated. These isolated hills have been the birthplace of men like Lincoln, Boone and Jackson, a sturdy race indeed, but now a sturdy race deteriorated for the lack of opportunity. They are independent, these mountaineers, free and courageous, very courageous, even in their handicapped situation, a trait which is characteristic of mountain people the world over. Not so much is known of the origin of the mountaineer or how he got left behind in the wilderness, but his future, because of the sturdiness, is a matter of optimistic speculation.

There is not just a little scattering of these people, either, sufficient to lend picturesque local color, but there are some three millions of them all told, and until the railroads burrowed in to them they were scarcely better off than the animals of the forests and hardly less wild. The little children would scamper into the woods at the approach of "furriners," as they call any one not living in the mountains, and real foreigners, by the way, they call the "outlandish," which is literal after all.

Sturdy Pioneer Stock Is There, But Also Descendants of Criminals

There were two classes of early settlers. Most of them were the fine old pioneer stock, seeking the freedom and independence and the great opportunities the rich, new country offered, but there came also many undesirables, criminals who were dumped on our shores.

Information regarding the origin of the feudist element is meagre indeed, but in all probability they descended from the early undesirables as well as the degenerate fringe of society known as the "poor whites." Backed into an eddy, with no traditions or ideals to guide them, it is small wonder the mountain whites are just what they are to-day.

They are not all objects of sympathy and concern, however, but they are all Americans and they are proud and free even in their isolation and poverty and while they rather resent the Lady Bountiful attitude toward them they are frankly interested in "furriners."

The wonder ever will be that Americans of whatever origin or color should have remained stationary for 200 years in any circumstances, especially in such privation as characterizes their lives in the wilderness.

There must have been some good reason, not mere chance, which originally led any considerable group of human beings to take up their abode in such a wilderness. There must have been some lure in the wild mountains which the lowlands could not offer, and if not sanctuary, what? In the mountains were safety from pursuit, exemption from all duty to country and State, and a living could be eked out, and the question will ever arise—what manner of man would deliberately take himself off from the marts of men and isolate himself in inaccessible mountains infested with savage beasts and rattlesnakes, for the mountains must have teemed with wild creatures in those days, and there are plenty of them there yet.

Then of course there were the unfortunate travellers in the tide of emigration through the mountains to the west who for one reason or another were stranded. Many a hopeful pioneer may have been sidetracked in the wilderness on account of a broken axle. Once halted in the hills with a broken axle or a dead horse it was often difficult ever again to resume the journey, and after a while the solitude engulfed them, and generation after generation has seen the sun rise and set on the same horizon.

This is not fiction. It is the truth.

The greater portion of the mountaineers are still scarcely more than squatters. In keeping without the range of things and in evading rent and taxes the mountaineer put himself entirely out of the stream of progress and out of reach of all the benefits and bounties of his Government, and rank outsiders have carried off the treasure chest which he held so lightly.

Many Millionaire War Babies, But Native Sons Got Nothing

As a matter of fact, the war left so many millionaires in the bituminous coal region that the best people are still a little bit sensitive about it. There were just as many war babies in the wilds as ever cried in Wall Street.

"Just plain onery!"

I stood and looked at the pathetic little corn patches clutching the steep hillsides, looking for all the world like pictures on a wall, wondering how the seeds ever stuck in one place long enough to take root. Who wouldn't be just plain onery if he had an everyday scrabble to hold on like the little corn patches on the hillsides?

Think of all that fabulous wealth underneath and the poor native sons of the soil still trying to scratch a living out of the surface! It did sound sort of hopeless and final.

Until the Eighteenth Amendment made moonshining a heinous crime, the moonshiner and his moonshine were accepted as part of the scenery in the South, and local authorities were not greatly agitated over his small traffic. In the old days it was generally accepted that the mountaineer sold "red eye" because it was easier to carry juice in bottles than to tote corn to market in bags on his shoulders through the steep hills, and, anyway, it was *his* business.

Moonshine whiskey made in the old way was pure whiskey, though too new to appeal to the connoisseur; but since prohibition it is an entirely different matter. He measures his corn crop by the gallon, and that while the market price of corn is about a couple of dollars, with no demand he transforms his corn into a commodity for which there is an overwhelming demand, thereby deriving a profit of 500—maybe 1,000 per cent.!

That didn't sound like any hill billie to me, I'll tell the world. It sounded like the performance of an up to date 100 per cent. American!

Perhaps it is not fair to measure him by the standards of other men. He does not understand the standards of other men, and it will certainly take him a long time to understand *why* the only place for a still is in a museum. I wanted to take back the pleasant picture of at least one homey cabin, but I did not find it. I caught myself sniffing the air for whiffs of fried chicken, corn pone, fried apples or something, but there was neither the picturesqueness of the negro cabin nor the delectable smells of cooking that usually issue therefrom—nothing of romance or beauty, although in the midst of wondrous beauty. Only sordid poverty, dejection and hopelessness, apparently; no evidence of any effort to create an atmosphere of home. As far as creature comforts are concerned they are where Moses was when the light went out.

Some of the poorer classes in the mountains live in cabins or shacks with not even a window. They have never had windows, and they are not necessary to them. Their "china" is tin; boxes or blocks serve for chairs, while their beds are bags of straw. Life is one long struggle to keep soul and body together, and they do not know how to better their condition.

Always Hospitable to Strangers, With No Apology for Poverty

To the stranger they are frank and friendly, and always hospitable. No apology for their poverty but "Welcome, stranger, to what we got" is the almost invariable greeting.

It is characteristic of the mountaineer that he is rawboned.

"They are that hard and wiry they look's though they had been raised on gravel," one old man described them, and certain it is that not much surplus tissue is wasted among them, neither men nor women.

"Hit's climbin' and toten' what keeps 'em skinny," the lantern jawed individual who keeps a crossroads store told me, as he eyed me in a friendly way.

It is certainly a case of "climbin' and toten'," for even if a wagon road were possible not many of the mountain people would have anything but "Shanks mare" to travel it, and a wagon is only for the well to do.

Whether a few more hundred years would find the mountain people in fur and feathers may be out of the question, but it is certain they have not progressed an inch the last hundred or so years.

There are many schools, colleges and hospitals working ceaselessly for the betterment of the mountain boys and girls, and the effort is ever in the direction of practical training which will not change too much their natural characteristics. They are taught not to despise their poor cabins but to make better ones, and when enough of boys and girls are taught to make better homes, better farms and better forests they will have come into their own, and the mountaineer will no longer be a problem but an asset.